



Module AT01

Series: Act & Reflect Phase

Title: Developing your Next Steps

Required Resources:

- One (1) pad of Post-it notes per team member.
- A large open wall.

Self-Facilitating Small Group Module

Part 1: Nudge Nudge (*Optional*)

Team Discussion

Look back over any notes you have taken in the Gather & Pray and Learn & Imagine phases. List any *nudges* you received in those processes. They do not need to be fully formed ideas. They might come in the form of “God put this group or situation on my heart.” Or, “I’m really curious about this or that and I want to know more.” They may focus on the wider community or the church community. List as many as you can ***individually***, one on each Post-it note.

In turn have each team member share each of their nudges and place them on the wall. As each team member shares group similar nudges together.

When everyone is done sharing have each person answer the following, *Which nudge from another person, when you heard it, peaked your interest the most?* Write each person’s answer below. (It’s okay to have duplicate answers).

Write down what categories of *nudges* were most frequent on your wall.

Between the two lists above, identify which your team feels called to actively pursue. How many is up to you, but for the WCI process 3-5 is advised.

Part 2: What's Next?

Teams are often very good at generating ideas. There is no end of ways each church can be a blessing to its community and members. Taking those nudges and moving them into reality is often the hardest part. The Act phase is an intentional time of experimentation. We rarely know what the exact outcome will be of the work we start, which is why the language of experimentation is so important. We need to start with a hoped-for outcome in mind, but we also must adapt to circumstances we encounter along the way.

Now that you have identified a set of nudges, each needs to be articulated as a Next Step. For each nudge four things should be expressed:

1. We have learned about ourselves... *What you have learned about the mission and work of the church?*
2. We have learned about our neighbors... *What you have learned about your community and its needs?*
3. We feel our church is called to... *What new activity/priority you are asking the church to take on? This should relate somehow to one or more the the discipleship quadrants (Worship, Devotion, Mercy, and Justice).*
4. The difference we expect to make from this is... *What outcomes are you looking for?*
5. If we are faithful, in 3-5 years, we expect our church/community to look like...

Item 4 on the above list is often the hardest. We are not used to talking in terms of true outcomes. Instead, we are more comfortable talking about activities. In an activity-focused view our goal might be, "Have a fall school supply drive." Did we complete that activity? Yes means success. However, completing the school supply drive isn't an outcome. Outcomes are about making a measurable or describable difference. In an outcome-focused view, our goal might be, "Increase the level of school readiness by making sure every child has all required school supplies and other essential items." Addressing that might require school supplies, haircuts, or after-school help. It will take some investigation, talking to teachers, parents, and students to figure out what the most important things are that make a child *ready* for the school year.

The second section of the following worksheet asks two critical questions: *How will you celebrate?* and *When will you deeply reflect and evaluate?* These two steps are often overlooked.

Many faith communities do good work blessing their communities while doing a terrible job celebrating those blessings. When the Holy Spirit moves and God works through your efforts those stories should be shared so others may be inspired. Sermons, Facebook, YouTube videos, etc should be used to share what God is up to in your midst. No pastor should preach a sermon without some illustration about God's

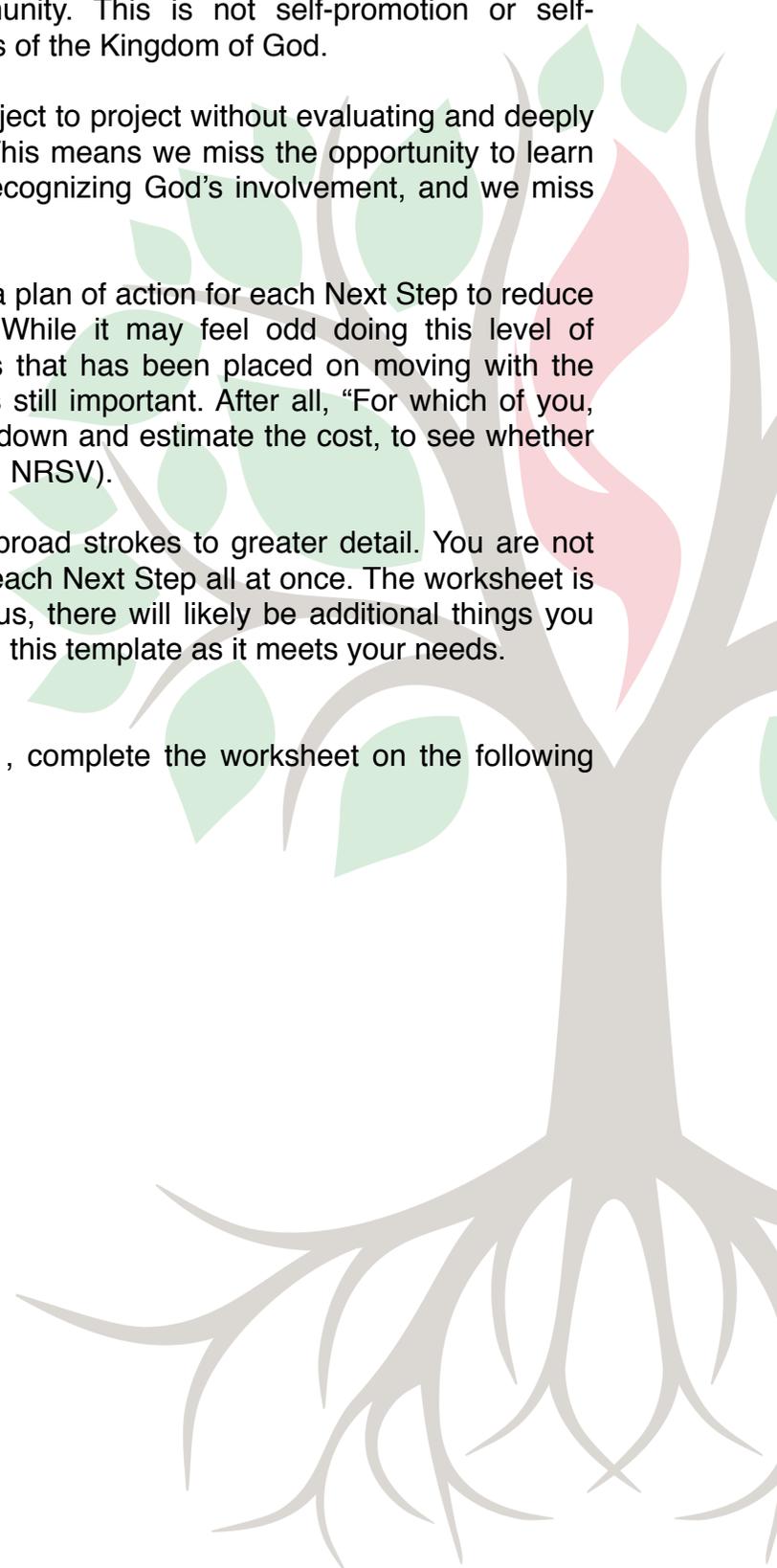
movement in the life of the faith community. This is not self-promotion or self-congratulatory, this is sharing the good news of the Kingdom of God.

Many faith communities also move from project to project without evaluating and deeply reflecting on activities already completed. This means we miss the opportunity to learn from what we've accomplished, we miss recognizing God's involvement, and we miss opportunities to expand the reach.

For all these reasons it's important to have a plan of action for each Next Step to reduce the risk of overlooking important details. While it may feel odd doing this level of planning, especially after all the emphases that has been placed on moving with the Holy Spirit, doing some level of planning is still important. After all, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it?" (Luke 14:28, NRSV).

The worksheet offered below moves from broad strokes to greater detail. You are not expected to fully complete a worksheet for each Next Step all at once. The worksheet is also not exhaustive. Depending on the focus, there will likely be additional things you need to identify. Please add or subtract from this template as it meets your needs.

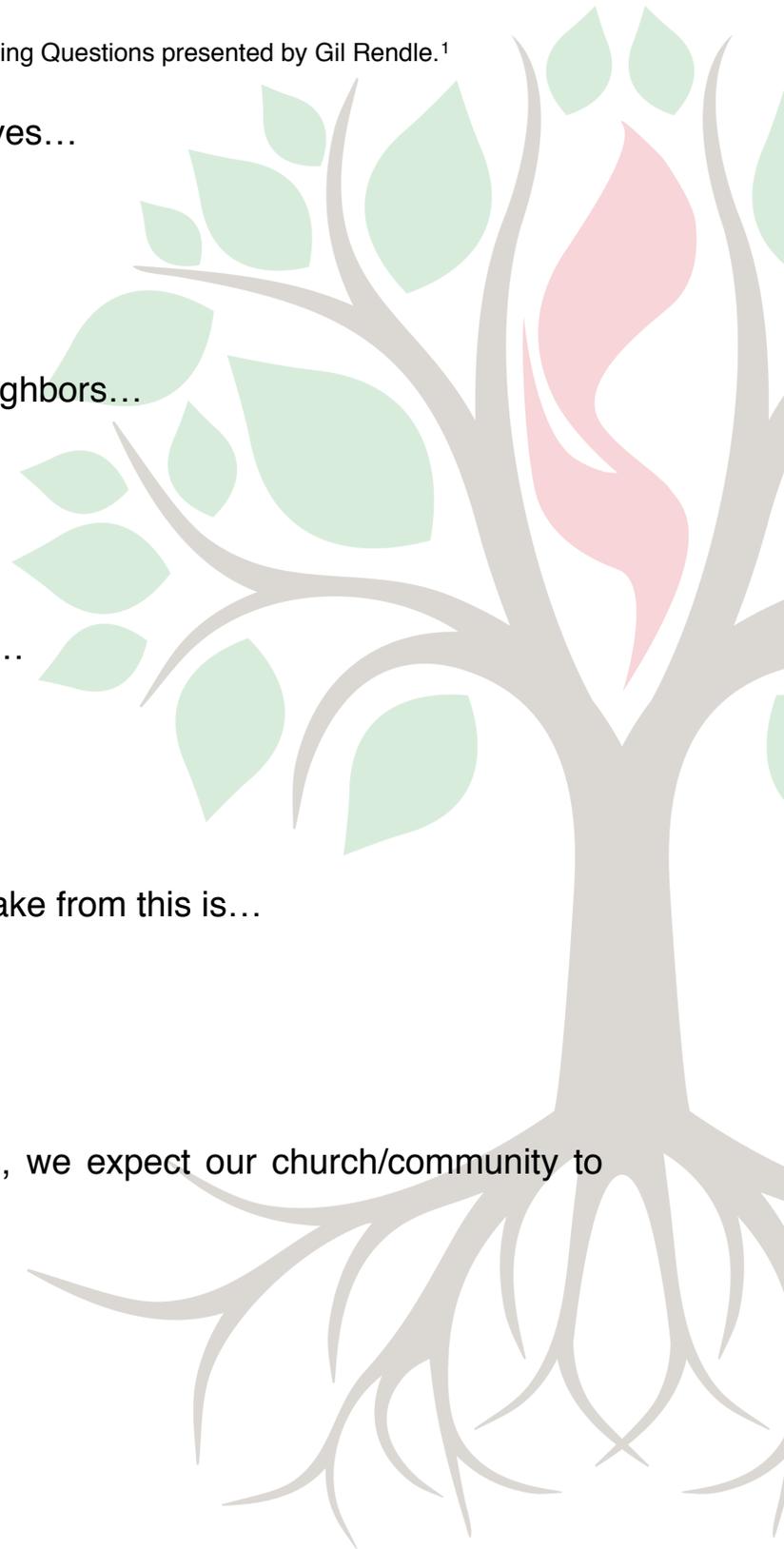
For each nudge on your final list in Part 1, complete the worksheet on the following pages.



Next Step Worksheet

The following were developed based on the Cascading Questions presented by Gil Rendle.¹

1. We have learned about ourselves...
2. We have learned about our neighbors...
3. We feel our church is called to...
4. The difference we expect to make from this is...
5. If we are faithful, in 3-5 years, we expect our church/community to look like...



¹ *Doing the math of mission* by Gil Rendle, 2014 (p.82-93)

Worksheet (cont.) - Details

How is this going to happen?

When is this going to happen?

- One time event When: _____
- On going When: _____ How Often: _____

Where?

How will you invite people to participate?

What is the budget?

How will we measure and share our progress?

How will we measure our progress?

How will you celebrate it with others in the congregation and community?

When will we reflect and evaluate this Next Step (page 8)?



Worksheet (cont.) - Reflect and Evaluate

As each next step progresses you need to take time to reflect on and evaluate each. You may use the following questions to guide that process.

1. Where have we seen God at work in this Next Step?
2. What have we learned?
3. In what way do we need to change what we are doing to reflect what we have learned?

